



**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
EDUCATION ACTIVITY**

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPENDENTS EDUCATION COUNCIL MEMBERS

SUBJECT: DEC Meeting Minutes, November 4, 2004

On November 4, 2004, the Dependents Education Council (DEC) met at the Webb Building 4040 North Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA. The meeting was hosted and chaired by the Honorable Charles S. Abell, Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. A listing of attendees is attached.

DEC MEETING OVERVIEW:

Mr. Abell provided opening comments and asked the members to introduce themselves. Dr. Joseph D. Tafoya, Director, Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) and Executive Secretary, DEC, reviewed the agenda items to be presented.

Dr. Tafoya reported that the school year is off to a good start and that he has had the opportunity to be present for the opening of three new school buildings located in Lakenheath, Rota, and Laurel Bay.

Mr. Abell stated that DoDEA had stepped up to the plate to develop a summer school program in Europe to support dependents of the 1st Armored Division serving in Iraq. He commented that this support meant a lot to the families and was a great success.

Mr. Abell also expressed his desire to resolve some of the eligibility issues which are topics for today's discussions.

There were no changes or corrections offered to the June 23, 2004 DEC minutes.

The meeting proceeded with discussions and briefings of previous DEC issues.

These included:

INFORMATIONAL BRIEFINGS:

Budget Update

Ms. Irma Finocchiaro, Associate Director for Financial and Business Operations, first provided a briefing on the final status of the FY 2004 budget, the FY 2004

Congressional reductions, and funding shortfall of \$62.7 million created by the foreign currency fluctuations in the living quarters and post allowances overseas. Through realignment of internal DoDEA resources and support from OSD, all of the \$62.7 million was restored.

Ms. Finocchiaro advised the group that the School Year 2004-05 demographics as of September 30, 2004, indicate the number of students has declined by about 2,000 in the Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS) and 2,000 in the Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools (DDESS).

Ms. Finocchiaro stated that DoDEA was advised that Congressional reductions and OSD adjustments for this fiscal year which would amount to approximately \$66 million. She described the proposed method for distributing the cuts without affecting the educational programs at the classroom level, but went on to explain that DoDEA has been successful in the past in working with OSD to restore a large amount of funding to cover the reductions after the mid-year review with OSD or at year-end. A discussion occurred regarding the difficulty of applying any restoration of funding to school programs so late in the academic year.

One-time Congressional Adds for FY 2005 amount to \$58.8 million. This funding is earmarked to meet Congressional intent.

DoDEA has requested additional funding to support the increased enrollment in DDESS schools at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, and Ft. Stewart, Georgia, as a result of the Army's Residential Communities Initiative. Ms. Finocchiaro advised that a total of \$127.5 million has been requested to cover the Army's RCI. The funding is based on the following: \$87.2M Operational & Maintenance funding requested from OSD, \$1.3M procurement funding requested from OSD, and \$39M MILCON programmed funding from the Department of the Army. This funding is required to provide teachers, supplies and facilities to accommodate the anticipated growth.

Mr. Abell stressed that Services should discuss their plans that could result in concentrating children in a new area with either DoDEA or the Local Education Activity to determine possible impacts.

(Item Open)

Military Construction

Ms. Finocchiaro briefed the members on the status of the FY 2005 MILCON program. She reported that the funding (\$36.247 million) which had been rescinded by Congress for the new elementary/middle school in Grafenwoehr, Germany, had been

restored by OSD and the school is scheduled to be completed in August 2006. In Vilseck, Germany, the additions and renovations to Vilseck High School, amounting to \$9.011 million, are on schedule and fully funded. A contract is expected to be let in March 2005, with a completion date of October 2006. In Guam, the new high school at the U.S. Naval Hospital Compound, Agana Heights, with a cost estimate of \$26.964 million, is scheduled for completion in June 2006. The remaining funds of \$746,000 may be used for unspecified minor MILCON items or used to cushion minor increases in other projects.

There was discussion regarding the changing situation in regards to Guam and the possibility of a changing mission requiring a different configuration of schools. Mr. Abell advised that the school has been designed with flexibility to accommodate possible future expansion.

(Item Open)

Summer School 2004

Dr. Elizabeth Middlemiss, Associate Director for Education and Principal Deputy Director, DoDEA, reported on the summer school offerings made available to students this year and possible plans for offerings for 2005. At the high school level over 300 students enrolled to take High School English, Algebra, and Geometry online. Students who completed these courses were awarded credit. It was noted that 30% of the students who were enrolled, subsequently withdrew. The Algebra I pilot being utilized at four middle schools had 91 students enrolled, with 50 students participating. While some good materials were taken from these offerings, it was determined this is not useful as an online offering in the future. Elementary students (Kindergarten through eighth grade) were offered an online Summer Family Learning Program, focusing on math and reading, this was a series of activities to support and enrich student learning over the summer months. This offering will continue, at no cost, to students.

The special summer school initiative developed specifically to serve the students of the 1st Armored Division drew an enrollment of 542 students. There were 40 students who never reported and other students attended anywhere from 6-19 days of classes. Major Command (MACOM) reported that, for those who attended, this was a very beneficial program. Teachers are using materials from these classes in their curriculum now.

For FY 2005, although budget will guide and direct the actions, DoDEA is planning to offer remedial online courses for high school courses, and to continue to provide Summer Family Learning online focused on math and reading for the elementary students. Dr. Middlemiss went on to say that, 1) no funds are currently allocated for

summer school; 2) summer programs should be distributed worldwide; 3) a mechanism is needed to ensure higher attendance; and 4) adequate staffing would have to be obtained to allow scheduled professional development to occur in support of the new math curriculum adoption.

Ms. Finocchiaro commented that it is possible that DoDEA could receive funding to support 10% of the DoDEA student population taking summer school classes from emergency supplemental funding. The estimated cost to educate 10% of the DoDEA student population is \$3.7M. Dr. Tafoya explained how supplemental allocations are given to state schools to conduct summer school, while DoDEA receives no additional funding to offer a summer school program.

Discussion followed which centered on exploring various strategies for funding summer school for 2005. Mr. Abell stated, that he sees the supplemental funding as a cost of war, however not everyone will agree with that. He added that many other costs of war will compete with this funding, but we will give it our best shot. He went on to state that the summer school program also serves as an outlet to reduce the stress of having family members deployed in support of the Global War on Terrorism.

(Item Open)

APF/NAF Eligibility

Mr. J. Michael Lynch, DoDEA Chief of Staff presented the history of the effort that would amend the definition of sponsor and change the category status for local hire APF/NAF dependents from space-available, tuition-free to space-required, tuition-free. At this time the legislative proposal has been resubmitted to OSD for inclusion in the Omnibus process for the next legislative cycle. Mr. Abell stated that he will communicate to Congress his desire to have this legislation approved this year. There was conversation that this action was being held in abeyance until the Reserve issue was resolved to Congressional desires.

(Item Open)

Contractor Eligibility

Mr. Lynch provided the time line of the Contractor Eligibility legislation. It has been deferred to FY 06. He explained that we cannot currently guarantee this class of students a place in the school. DoDEA can hire teachers, but not build facilities to accommodate the contractor's dependents. Mr. Abell stated that he is in support of this action as well, but wishes to have it follow the APF/NAF Eligibility issue.

Many members expressed their support for this legislation. There was a request from the floor that the members be informed about what contacts are being made within the services to get input on this issue.

(Item Open)

Non-Command Sponsored Eligibility

Mr. Lynch briefed the group on the categories that have Space-Available, Tuition-Free waivers. He went on to explain the proposal to eliminate the statement "Tuition-Free" and identified the groups by theater and by service that would be affected by this change. The objective is to encourage Command sponsored tours for support of dependents.

Input from the members indicated that implementation of this policy at this point in time would not have a good result because of the turbulence that is occurring. Many agreed that the services' personnel sections could provide a solution, but that it would take some time to assess the size of the problem and to implement an appropriate solution. This item will be deferred for 2 years. This delay will allow the re-shaping of overseas to take place, and therefore provide clarity to the situation at that point, and give Services the opportunity to gather data and therefore determine how much MILCON would be required.

(Item Open)

Reserve Eligibility Proposal

Mr. Lynch briefed the group on the past practices in enrollment categories for activated reservists. He explained that language in the FY04 National Defense Authorization Act states that all reservists must be treated with parity. Additionally, the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Act of 1994 provides DoD employees the ability to retain their benefits while on reserve duty. DoDEA is faced with the challenge of implementing this legislation.

Discussions centered on the various inequities of the proposed long term policy for assigning enrollment categories. Mr. Abell agreed that it is not good legislation which is difficult to implement equitably.

Consensus is to change all to tuition free and for Mr. Abell to address Congress to change the law. This will promulgate back to the services. An update will be provided at the next DEC.

(Item Open)

Guard Eligibility

Mr. Lynch explained the current and recommended changes affecting Guard Eligibility. The proposal is that service members must be Title 10 or Title 32, and deployed for 365 days. The members agreed.

(Item Closed)

Non DoDDS Schools Programs in English Speaking Foreign Countries

Mr. Lynch led the discussion on the Non-DoDDS program issues with the group. He explained that the priority is to use local non-tuition schools in English speaking countries. There was a request at the last DEC meeting to perform an analysis of the issues and report out. Each Director (Dr. Nancy Bresell, Director, DoDDS-P and DDESS Guam; Ms. Diana Ohman, Director; DoDDS-E; and Dr. Elaine Beraza, Director, DDESS and DoDDS Cuba) reported the findings and recommendations for their specific areas.

The decision on this subject will be deferred. After the first of the year, more research will be conducted and results provided at the next DEC. Another related topic, London Central Dorm, was discussed.

(Items Open)

ISSUE PAPERS:

Longitudinal Study

Dr. Middlemiss reported that although the analysis is not complete, the Longitudinal Study looking at the high school initiatives is well underway and is exhibiting positive feedback. A complete report will be given at the June 2005 DEC meeting. Dr. Middlemiss requests support in obtaining e-mail and phone numbers of students exiting the system.

(Item Open)

Meals Program

Ms. Finocchiaro reported that the memo to exclude housing allowance from the computation for free and reduced meals has been signed and copies were included in the DEC binder.

(Item Open)

Teacher Transfer Pilot Program

LTG Broadwater presented the EUCOM issues with the Teacher Transfer Program and requested a policy change to consider the local spouses ahead of teachers requesting a transfer.

Dr. Tafoya stated that DoDEA is experiencing a loss of students system-wide. Staffing will become a crucial issue in the near future which will impact the way teachers are hired. A committee will be established in the February 05 timeframe to review the policy with the long term perspective in mind. DoDEA will request representation from all areas on this committee with the goal of reporting back to the DEC at the June 2005 meeting.

(Item Open)

Open Discussion

There were a series of questions and discussions concerning the status of the DDESS Transfer Study. Mr. Abell stated that the study is under review in the Pentagon and referenced any action that might be considered would be addressed in next year's legislative cycle.

Final Comments

Dr. Tafoya told the group that two committees will be formed this year to look at the quality of the services that we provide to our students. The first will look at the middle school program to determine the core essential items for 6th and 7th grade programs. The Second is the Elementary Task Force which will look at the issue of the value added by DoDEA in these areas. The emphasis will be on 4th, 5th, and 6th graders and will include a look at what we do to teach students how to read technical information. Members of the command, parents and teachers will be included on these committees.

Mr. Abell expressed his appreciation to the group for their attendance and participation in the discussions.

Joseph D. Tafoya
Executive Secretary